TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

Special Convocation Number

The Convocation Keynote

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue

• Contains a brief digest of much of the program of the second National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Elgin, Illinois, Nov. 14-16, 1944.

No. 13
Published December, 1944

• The fact that nearly 40 per cent of all farms in the United States are operated by tenants and sharecroppers was declared to be one of the greatest barriers in the way of rural progress by Dr. Henry S. Randolph of New York, Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in the keynote address before the second annual National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, called by the Committee on Town and Country which represents the Home Mission Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education.

"Actually only about one farmer out of three in this, 'the richest domain on the face of the earth,' owns farm land free of mortgage debt. We are no longer a nation of 'freeholders' living on the land," the speaker continued.

The rural churchmen from all over the nation who gathered for the convocation at Elgin, Ill., November 14-16, were called upon to study and act regarding this problem of land tenure as well as those of soil conservation, family life in the rural community and cooperation both in agriculture and among rural churches.

Importance of Ownership

Dr. Randolph announced that "important findings" are coming from a study of land tenure made by the Land Tenure Committee, and called upon local rural churches to continue studies in their own immediate farm communities. "The local church should promote and encourage in every way possible the farmer-ownership type of land tenure. Wherever land tenure is on the landlord-tenant basis the church must advocate a Christian sharing of the income from the soil." Rural church leaders were called upon to cooperate wisely and enthusiastically with the various government agencies such as the Farm Security Administration and the Extension Service.

Furthermore, the keynote speaker declared, "Local churches should be encouraged to become voluntary agents to help farms locate on favorable farm land. . . . They should set up local credit unions for the purpose of helping deserving farmers to buy their own land. They should give serious consideration to cooperative church homesteading programs so that through mutual aid and sharing more people of the community may own land, equipment and livestock.

Churches Must Help

"This convocation should go on record advising our church boards, which hold great permanent funds in various types of stocks, bonds, mortgages and other securities, to make money available from such funds for investment in farm homesteading projects . . . for example, the Big Lick Homesteading project in Tennessee" which was to be described in detail by the Rev. Eugene Smathers, pastor and director, later in the convocation. "The church throughout the nation must become more concerned about the security of the farmer on the land even at the point of taking issue with the large commercial interests in agriculture."

Dr. Randolph pointed to the fundamental necessity of "wise use and maintenance of the soil" upon which in the last analysis "the future of mankind" depends. "Farmers must recognize their obligations as stewards of the soil—that the earth is holy and that it is to be maintained for the use of ourselves and those who will come after us." The convocation of rural churchmen was challenged to do much "to develop among rural people proper emotional attitudes toward the soil and an appreciation of their stewardship."

Co-ops Useful

The cooperative movement was indicated to be "the best method of enabling farmers to handle their own business in the most efficient manner in competition with organizations representing labor and industry." The speaker then pointed

out the need for cooperation among rural churches, declaring that there is a church for every 300 rural persons in America whereas there should be one for every 1000 persons. He pointed out that much is being achieved in this direction through federated churches, community churches and larger parishes.

Basic to these economic, community and church problems, Dr. Randolph pointed out the primary importance of the rural family, which "constitutes the biological mainstay of American society." He quoted Charles J. Galpin to the effect that "the farm family is holding the family idea in the nation almost at the last ditch" and urged his hearers to be "deeply concerned about the quality of life attainable for farm people. The church, as no other institution, is in position to provide the ideals for ennobling and dignifying personality."

The speaker urged that the rural community be preserved as "the local planning and action group for all rural progress." He declared that "the rural church at its best has concerned itself with the total life of its people, recognizing that we are in the stream of changing rural society and that it must address itself not entirely to saving the individual's soul, but to the broader vision of saving the community—better farming, better business and better living for my neighbor and myself. This means good churches, good schools, good homes, sanitary surroundings, adequate opportunities to play and wholesome neighborhood relations."

Minister's Wife Speaks

• "There is a direct relationship between the beauty of a sanctuary and the heart of a worshipping congregation," said Mrs. Ralph Kofoed, of Erie, Illinois, speaking as a minister's wife. "We should try by every means to create in our people a love of the beautiful, and this will recreate in their hearts a love of God's house they have never known before. And then, in turn, it will not be so hard to tune their minds to the spirit and heart of God himself, for whom they built the church."

"In the smallest of our country churches it is possible to give attention to the smallest detail in a worship service, and create a quiet sense of God's presence," Mrs. Kofoed declared. This will not be hard if each minister will keep his own heart open to the many ways his congregation may be brought into the presence of God. The country church must also concern itself fully with "the health and physical well-being of our people." We must remember "how Jesus went about the little villages healing the sick."

Minister As Homesteader

• The rural minister should himself be a modern homesteader, declared Ralph Templin, director of the School of Living, Suffern, N. Y. Mr. Templin, formerly a rural educator in India, said he would rather operate a few acres than have $500 in the form of salary. Mr. Templin declared that modern machinery could be adapted so as to help the rural home and the family and not destroy them. He said that a rural minister could find the time with the help of machinery on a small scale so that he could operate several acres of land, have a large garden and some animals. He said a small cereal mill was also a practical device for a minister as a homesteader. He contended that the experience of homesteading would enable the rural minister to see life whole and understand religion as that higher aspect of living which issues out of the harmony of man with God and of man with man.

A Layman's Challenge

• Laymen should talk systematically with their ministers about farm problems, production, marketing, credit, etc., declared T. H. Townsend of the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association, Waterville, N. Y. We must have farms large enough, so that machinery can be operated profitably, he declared. The farm cooperative is one of the most important economic institutions in the nation, and ministers should be fully informed about their operations and results.

Do church leaders really support agriculture? Mr. Townsend said there was apparently evidence that the leaders of the church at large supported organized labor rather than organized agriculture. At many church discussions of economic issues, the farm family and the farm producer are not even mentioned, Mr. Townsend said.

Views of Young People

• The views of the young people in the rural communities were described by Rev. Edwin L. Becker, now director of Rural Work for the Disciples Church, recently a minister at Peru, Nebraska. Mr. Becker said the young people see a united school and a church divided. They also believe that the church has often sought to curb their social and recreational activities. Youth seemed to have the impression that ministers are not very able men. Mr. Becker recommended that there should be more united youth work in rural communities. The church should lead in unifying and coordinating the various phases of organized life. The church must take the lead in cooperating with other agencies in the community. Finally, the church must give opportunity for young people to express themselves.

Prayer Circles

• Rev. Hilda Ives, of the New England Town and Country Church Commission, arranged for prayer circles that met each morning at Elgin at 7:30 A.M.

What Is the Convocation?

The National Convocation on the church in Town and Country is an informal assembly of individuals, held annually under the auspices of the Committee on Town and Country, which represents the Home Missions Council of North America, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the International Council of Religious Education.

The Convocation brings together many of those most interested in the church in the rural communities of the nation. At the Convocation these persons worship together, educate and inspire one another, and formulate findings and recommendations.

How Did the Convocation Start?

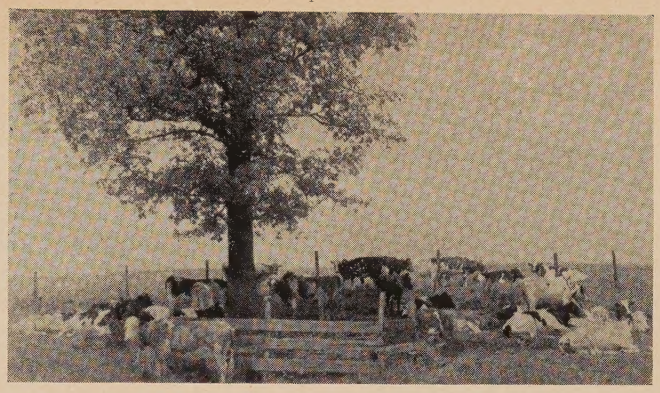
The Convocation was begun in 1943 because of the conviction of the Committee on Town and Country that there should be a regularly held gathering. National conferences had been held before under church auspices, in 1916 and in 1936. It was felt that there must be a continuous process. The decision to inaugurate the Convocation, and the paper TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, was considerably hastened by expressions of opinion as to their need on the part of prominent laymen in the churches.

Who Follows It Up?

The ideas and specific plans considered are implemented in numerous ways and channels. The six hundred and forty-five persons who took part at the Elgin meeting are the first and foremost line of implementation. These men and women live in rural communities. They are pastors and lay people in local churches. They are administrators of numerous denominational and interdenominational agencies. They are teachers and writers, and students in colleges and seminaries.

The local and state councils of churches have special responsibilities for furthering the cooperative aspects of the Convocation's ideas and plans. There is an extensive follow-up through the religious press and news services. The daily press calls attention to Convocation highlights. Nationally, the main responsibility for follow-up rests upon the various rural church departments of the constituent denominations, and also their agencies of religious education. The Committee on Town and Country is the national clearing house for interdenominational programs, and it has responsibility for those aspects of the Convocation's recommendations requiring national collaboration among the religious bodies.

This issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH and other numbers, are, we hope, influential in implementation.



The Registration

• Beginning the day before the Convocation, through the morning of the first day of the sessions (November 14, 1944), it was evident that this would be a well-attended gathering. The final registration mounted to 645 persons from at least 25 denominations, living in 40 states and Canada.

The ten largest denominational "delegations" were as follows:

The Methodist Church	186
Presbyterian bodies	116
Baptist	55
Church of the Brethren	43
United Brethren	33
Evangelical Church	32
Evangelical and Reformed	31
Congregational-Christian	31
Disciples of Christ	30
United Lutheran	14

Many Elgin Cooperators

• The members of the Convocation thank the First Methodist Church of Elgin (the headquarters Church), the First Evangelical Church, the Congregational Church, the First Baptist Church, the Church of the Brethren, the Trinity Lutheran Church, the First Presbyterian Church, their pastors and members.

Also, the Ministerial Association, the national headquarters staff of the Church of the Brethren, the Chamber of Commerce, the David C. Cook Company, the several industries and the daily newspaper, *The Courier News.*

Also, the Illinois Council of Churches and the Illinois College of Agriculture, including the Agricultural Extension Service and the denominational executives of the state of Illinois.

Also, 25 state agricultural colleges for contributing many valuable publications to some of the Commissions.

The Way We Sang

• Dr. J. H. Kolb, on arising to give his address on "Social Issues," said he could not refrain from saying how much he was impressed with the way we sang the hymns. The organist of the First Methodist Church, Mrs. Jane Hampton Chipman, said she liked to hear us sing!

"Saint Hilda"

• The Rev. Dr. Hilda Ives of the New England Town and Country Church Commission, has received a letter from a prominent Roman Catholic Monsignor, addressed "Dear St. Hilda." "Our Hilda" is America's best known woman country minister.

The Unanswered Question

• Heard in the lobby was this one: "Why is it that ministers, when the subject for discussion is cooperation among local churches, immediately try to discuss economic theory"?

Soil Saving and Farm Ownership

• "Two hundred million acres of cropland has been ruined for further practical production or severely damaged in the United States mostly during the past 100 years—land equal to the combined extent of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Maryland and Missouri—by soil erosion," according to Dr. H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service of the federal Department of Agriculture in an address before the second annual national Convocation on Town and Country Church here today.

Bennett's Challenge

"The solution to the problem," he continued, "can be stated in simple terms: it is to use each acre of land in accordance with its individual needs for conservation. A field which is not adapted to corn because of the character of the soil, the slope of the land, the climate, or the degree of erosion, should be put to some other use for which it is suited. It has been our failure in the past to recognize this basic principle."

Resources Known

In his address Dr. Bennett pointed to the factual data compiled by the Service. "For the first time in our history," he said, "we have a factual inventory of our soil resources and their physical needs. For example, approximately 400 million acres are being used for cultivated crops, but some 40 million of these acres are unsuited by nature for cultivation. They are too poor, too steep, too eroded, or otherwise unfit for this kind of use. They should be put to grass or forest—the kind of production best suited to their capabilities. More than 90 per cent of our farm land needs some type of conservation treatment."

Local Independence

The speaker pointed out the independence of local farmers in the soil conservation program, indicating that "soil conservation districts are formed under permissive state laws and can be formed on the petition of farmers and by the will of the majority."

"Soil and water conservation is now getting into the bloodstream of America," Dr. Bennett declared, "and is becoming part of the religious life of the nation. This is fitting and proper for the Bible tells us 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,' and no force is better able to encourage conservation than the spiritual power of the church."

Big Lick

Two practical demonstration church homestead projects were described last night by the Rev. Eugene Smathers of Big Lick, Tenn. and the Rev. Calvin Schnucker, Dubuque University, Iowa. These projects were in answer to the question: What can local churches do to help young people to become farm owners?

The Big Lick project in Calvary Presbyterian Church was based on a fund of $34,500 set aside by the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. for the primary purpose of acquiring tracts of land, subdividing this land into suitable sized farms and making these farms available to approved young people for operation and improvement under long time contract.

Ramsey Parish

Over an eight year period from 1932 to 1940 the project described by the Rev. Mr. Schnucker in the Ramsey parish, Kossuth county, Iowa, operated through individual purchase of land based upon an educational and counselling program by the pastor and church.

The speaker told of the results as follows: "In 1932 27 per cent of the farms of Kossuth county were owner operated. By 1940 this had risen to 28.2 per cent, a total rise of only 1.2 per cent for the entire county. In 1932 34 per cent of the land operated by members of the Ramsey parish was owner operated. By 1940 60 per cent of the land operated by members of the parish was owner operated plus 6 per cent which was being operated by a son or daughter whose change of ownership had already been arranged."

Town & Country Church

Published by the Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council of N. A., the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the International Council of Religious Education.

297 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

15c a copy; nine copies, $1.00

Remit to the Home Missions Council

Board of Editors

Rural Church Officers

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

EDWIN L. BECKER, United Christian Missionary Society, Disciples of Christ.

MARK A. DAWBER, Executive Secretary, Home Missions Council of North America.

HENRY W. MCLAUGHLIN, Department of Country Church and Sunday School Extension, Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication, Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

HENRY S. RANDOLPH, Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

MARK RICH, Town and Country Work, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

CLIFFORD L. SAMUELSON, Division of Domestic Missions, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church; Chairman of the Committee on Town and Country.

MARTIN SCHROEDER, Rural Work Representative, Board of American Missions, United Lutheran Church in America.

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP, Town and Country Department, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

A. J. WALTON, Superintendent Town and Country, Board of Missions and Church Extension, the Methodist Church.

M. R. ZIGLER, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Managing Editor.

Tasters From the Commission Mill

The fostering of "understanding, tolerance and love" between farmers and members of organized labor was urged upon all by the second annual national convocation on Town and Country Church, in its adoption of the report of the commission on urban and rural relations. It recommended an interchange of urban and rural experience in church study groups.

Minority Peoples

All segregation of minority groups was condemned as unChristian "in that it denies the right of freedom of action and expression which is guaranteed to every member of the family of God," in a report of the commission on the rural church and minority groups also adopted by the convocation.

The report recommended "that the church aid in the orientation of Negroes who have gone into industrial defense areas, and seek to bring about a better understanding between white and Negro people by providing wholesome contacts. The church should help to remove all illegal restrictions not imposed upon other citizens, such as Jim Crow laws."

The church was called upon to "use its influence to the end that Japanese-Americans be given the opportunity to choose their place of residence like all American citizens; that their properties be restored to them in full, or equivalent; and that local churches welcome them into Christian fellowship."

This report further urged that the church "correct widespread erroneous ideas concerning the Jewish people" and "seek to create good will between Jews and Christians reminding itself of its heritage." Full citizenship for the American Indian and improved status and equality of opportunities for other minorities were recommended.

Need for Organization

The convocation recognized "the need for organization of farm laborers" and for cooperatives in many areas of rural living particularly health and hospitalization. A special report singled out the present national administration for commendation for its rural electrification program "and its consequent comforts and services to 2,557,000 rural farm families and many rural non-farm homes since 1936."

Many of the reports of commissions specified the needs of small communities and farm areas in meeting the adjustments of the postwar period and in receiving the returning service men. The commission on the church and agricultural reconstruction pointed to a caution in the matter of helping returning service men to settle on the land issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the effect "that we must guard against too many people going back to the land both because of the lack of sufficient good land available, and because the best equipped for agricultural life should man the farms from now on."

"This administration of our government has made us soil conscious more than any other before it. It has pointed out and has demonstrated ways in which soil conservation can be achieved," the report continued.

Bob Zigler's Home Town

• For many years, the Committee on Town and Country dreamed of having a meeting in the office of Rev. M. R. Zigler of the Brethren Service Committee, Elgin. The Committee assembled hopefully at 2:30 P.M. on November 13, ready for business, only to learn that Bob wasn't home. He rushed in from a field trip only a few minutes later.

What Is the Eleventh Commandment?

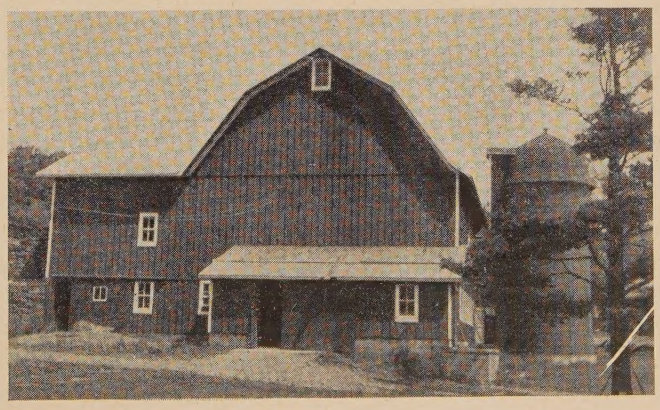
• Answering a question frequently heard in the lobby at Elgin, the Eleventh Commandment was written by Dr. Walter Clay Lowdermilk, internationally known soil conservationist. The text is as follows:

"Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or perish from off the face of the earth."

N.C.R.L.C. Reported

• The recent sessions of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, held at Cincinnati, Ohio, were reported to the Convocation by C. M. McConnell of Boston University and Aaron Rapking of the Methodist Board of Missions. Pat McConnell said he was impressed with the zeal of the Roman Catholic "rural churchmen," and that it was not impossible that our Convocation and the Roman Catholic Rural Life Conference might be held in the same place on the same dates, with one or more sessions held jointly.

Aaron Rapking said the Catholics were well-informed about rural life, that they were dedicated to rural improvement, and that they were emphasizing the family and land.



Social Issues the Church Must Face

• J. H. Kolb of the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, declared that "midwest agriculture is still isolationist when it comes to Argentine beef, New Zealand butter and Southern oils" before the Convocation. " 'One World' is still to be interpreted in rural terms," he said.

Speaking on "Social Issues in Rural Life and Agriculture with which Institutions, notably Church and School, are Mutually Involved," Dr. Kolb urged that citizens of rural life need to raise their sights beyond line fences and through, though not by, their local communities to the world in which they actually live and move and have their being."

"To interpret the recent election, however," he continued, "in terms of a deliverance for another four years, from the isolationists among which were many rural voters, is part but not all of the explanation. Judging by this voting we are still greatly and needlessly divided among ourselves — farmers and laborers, country and city, commercial and general welfare interests. Why farmers should be intrigued into being catspaws for commercial interests is difficult to explain."

General Welfare Interests

Dr. Kolb called upon rural people to have "a better conception of our own national interests" which "would mean more realization that special considerations cannot take precedence over general welfare interests within our national life and economy."

He continued, "It would appear that the time has come for rural voices to speak less of 'fair share' of the national incomes and consider more fully the general social policy whereby a total nation can move forward. Agriculture has come comparatively recently into the arena of special interests and pressure group tactics. It is often the plea of the amateur to 'please play fair' rather than to be concerned about revising the general rules of the game so that all can have a better opportunity.

"The 'parity' or fair-share concept is posited on an ethical assumption but quickly becomes involved in economic argument. There is no objection to ethical consideration in agricultural issues, but it is the confusion of argument to which attention is called here. If one is to urge a 'fair' share then one should follow immediately with some analysis of what opportunities and responsibilities rest with agriculture and rural life.

"Or, if one is to argue by the logic of economics, one must speak not only of the necessity for economical production at the farm but also of the total social economy in the midst of which and only by which agriculture can prosper. It is futile for farmers to try to be anti-labor, anti-industrial, anti-urban, anti-middleman. It is high time that they and their spokesmen assume a broader gauge of statesmanship concerning the 'general' welfare involving those wider and more inclusive interests of the nation with which agriculture and rural life are inexorably intermeshed. You need only be reminded that farm incomes rise and fall with the total income of non-farm people. In a word, rural life is not separate; it is a part and parcel of the national life."

Inter-Church Cooperation

In speaking of a population policy for the nation, Dr. Kolb called for a sense of balance among various elements of the national life and economy, indicating that at some point there must be established a strong stable minority of the population which is related to agriculture either in its primary or secondary processing relationships.

Dr. Kolb pointed to religion as one of the major interests in strengthening the rural community. He spoke of corporate worship and the accent on the spiritual quality of man. He outlined the necessity of inter-church cooperative relationships in the community. He placed central emphasis upon the development of the brotherhood of man through color, creed, class and race and development of the "Kingdom" in the community, referring especially to the parable of the seed falling into the ground.

Heifer Progress

• According to the Dairy Diary, published by the Heifer Project of the Brethren Service Committee, the heifers that were shipped to Puerto Rico, have been visited and are alive and well. They're cows now. (The experts said they'd die when they got there).

More than 1,000 heifers are already tagged. They have been contributed by members of the Church of the Brethren, and others. They are destined to go for relief and reconstruction among needy people abroad, as shipping becomes available.

Other denominations, Kiwanis Clubs, high schools, etc., are interested. It now looks as though 5,000 heifers might be contributed, if favorable shipping conditions develop.

Heifers Not Present!

• Some members of the Convocation wanted the leaders of the Heifer Project of the Brethren Service Committee to have a few heifers available at Elgin, so that the Congregationalists might know what they are like. It couldn't be arranged.

Church of the Brethren

• One of our hosts at Elgin was the headquarters staff of the Church of the Brethren, one of the historic peace churches. The denomination reported to the last yearbook of the American Churches 179,843 members. Many of the members of the Church of the Brethren are farmers. E. M. Hersch, general manager of the Publishing House, supervised all details of registration for the Convocation.

Press Coverage

• The numerous items in the daily press of Elgin, Chicago and many other places, were the result of the work of Rev. G. Shubert Frye, of the Presbyterian Synod of New York, who handled the publicity for the conference. The materials published on the front pages in this issue, summarizing convocation sessions, are the work of his hand.

Hymns of the Rural Spirit

• At Elgin the first public announcement was made of the plans for a book, to be called *Hymns of the Rural Spirit,* to be published if there are enough orders, by the Commission on Worship of the Federal Council. The 100 Christian hymns and the 25 rural folk songs were selected by Mark Rich, Clifford L. Samuelson and Ralph L. Williamson, assisted by Deane Edwards. This new hymnal will supplement regularly used church hymnals.

The hymns are all to be set to music that can be sung well by the small congregation. The book will include both old and new hymns. The hymnal is designed for use throughout the church year, and especially for Rural Life Sunday, harvest festivals, conferences, camps and outdoor services.

The book will sell for not over 45 cents a copy. It will be necessary to have orders for 10,000 copies before printing can begin. We believe about 200 congregations ordering an average of about 50 copies would assure publication.

For a prospectus that includes six hymns, available without charge, address the Commission on Worship, Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Denominational Conferences

• On November 15, thirteen denominational groups held conferences as an integral part of the Convocation. The following denominations held these sessions, which dealt with their own main rural concerns and interests:

The Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
United Presbyterian Church
Congregational-Christian Church
Northern Baptist Convention
United Lutheran Church
Protestant Episcopal Church
United Brethren in Christ, with Evangelical Church
Disciples of Christ
Evangelical and Reformed Church
Church of the Brethren

Overseas Relief and Reconstruction

• Leslie B. Moss, Director of the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction, described the actions of this committee which assists a panel of nine agencies who have been operating during war time to carry relief to groups for whom the churches left a particular responsibility.

"This panel has included the Church Committee for Relief in Asia," he said, "which has sent several million dollars to China in the past eight years to help relieve distress arising from war. Loans for business men and farmers in small amounts, clothes for refugees, food, care for children, and medicines badly needed for soldiers and civilians alike have all been provided. Durin 1943 approximately three million people were helped from these funds. During the last year more than $100,000 has been sent through church channels to help relieve the victims of the severe famine in Bengal."

Dr. Moss spoke of the war prisoners aid carried on by the Y.M.C.A. and of the newly organized Commission on World Council Services which will gather up in the United States the church interest in service to the churches of Europe in the post-war period. "Regathering of congregations, training of new leadership, help for youth movements, resuscitation of the welfare agencies of the churches such as hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages, are a part of the services needed," he said. "In the past only casual relief service could be offered. Now the big task of reconstruction of church life begins to appear."

"There will never be a peaceful world," the Director of the Committee declared, "until the church remakes the world into the image of the Kingdom of Heaven. This cannot be done by church pressure groups at peace conferences. It can be done as the church gives itself to the task of displaying the realities of mercy and justice in meeting the needs of men."

David C. Cook Cooperation

• Many helpful services to the Convocation were given by members of the staff of the David C. Cook organization, publishers of many Sunday School materials. J. C. Woods also helped us frequently through the Elgin Chamber of Commerce, which was one of the organizations inviting us to Elgin.

Church Women Served Meals

• The Elgin Convocation could not have been held without the work of the many women of the three churches that served meals, the Evangelical Church, the Baptist Church, and the Congregational Church.

What Is a Rural Bishop?

• At the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Pat McConnell heard one of the Roman Catholic leaders introduced as "a rural bishop." He asked Msgr. L. G. Liguitti, "What is a rural bishop?" The reply was: "He is one with a diocese that doesn't have a street car."

Elgin Ministers Helped

• The Ministerial Association of Elgin, one of our hosts, assisted us mightily through the generous cooperation, including the labors, of the following pastors: Rev. John C. Schaeffer, Evangelical Church; Rev. Harry Zellar, Church of the Brethren; Rev. C. Wesley Israel, Methodist Church; Rev. H. G. McGuire, United Lutheran; Rev. Kermit Peterson, Presbyterian, U. S. A.; Rev. A. E. McKenney, Baptist.

The Worship Services

• Ralph L. Williamson, rural secretary of the New York State Council of Churches, arranged the themes of the several worship services, which were as follows:

"Fellowship"—Ralph L. Williamson
"People"—V. A. Edwards
"Soil"—W. H. Thompson
"Homes"—Marjorie Dickinson
"Youth"—Ralph Grieser
"World Sharing"—Ralph Cummins
"The Rural Christ"—Hilda L. Ives

The Commissions That Met

• Much of the work of the Convocation is done in 15 Commissions considering "almost all" of the aspects of the Church in Town and Country. The names of the Commissions and their chairmen are given below. Many other persons served as recorders and assisted in writing the reports.

1. The Church and Agricultural Reconstruction—T. A. Tripp, Congregational-Christian Churches, and Mark A. Dawber, Home Missions Council.

2. The Rural Church and Land Tenure—M. R. Zigler, Chairman, Church of the Brethren; A. H. Rapking, Methodist Church; Paul L. Vogt, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

3. The Church and the Farm Laborer and Sharecropper—Edith E. Lowry, Home Missions Council.

4. The Church and Rural Community Agencies—A. J. Walton, Methodist Church.

5. Church Cooperation in the Rural Community—Ralph L. Williamson, New York Council of Churches.

6. The Theological Seminary and the Rural Church—Ralph Woodward, Yale Divinity School.

7. The Agricultural College and the Rural Church—Wm. V. Dennis, Penn State College; D. E. Lindstrom, Illinois College of Agriculture; and J. H. Kolb, Wisconsin College of Agriculture.

8. The Rural Pastor's Functions —Glenn Gothard, Methodist Church, Thompson, Ohio.

9. Evangelism and Church Extension—Henry S. Randolph, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

10. Religious Education—Erwin L. Shaver and John B. Ketcham, International Council of Religious Education.

11. The Rural Church and Agricultural Missions—John H. Reisner, Agricultural Missions.

12. The Rural Church and Minority Peoples — Edgar S. Love, Methodist Church.

13. Financing the Church in Town and Country—Henry W. McLaughlin, Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

14. Worship Material for the Rural Church—E. Dargan Butt, Episcopal Church, Winchester, Tenn.

15. Urban-Rural Relations—Merle N. English, Woodstock, Ill.

"Most Dignified" Commissions

• By common consent the most dignified Commissions were No. 6, on The Theological Seminary and the Rural Church, and No. 7, on The Agricultural College and the Rural Church. A number of professors are among the members of these Commissions. We are glad to report that these two groups met straight across the hall, that the first day they waved to one another, and that on the second day they got chummy and held a joint session.

Both these Commissions would like to see more students for the ministry do under-graduate work in agricultural colleges. Since most readers of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are pastors, and have the opportunity to advise those who plan to enter the ministry, you, dear reader, may implement this plan.

What About A Report?

• A booklet containing the texts of addresses, and the reports of the Commissions, will be published as soon as possible. It will be mailed, without charge or further application, to every person who registered at Elgin. The price to others will be 25 cents a copy, postpaid.

Methodist Convocation

• Upon adjournment of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, Methodists present held a two-day Methodist Rural Convocation in the First Methodist Church in Elgin.

New Name

• A new name has appeared on the mast head of Town and Country Church. It is that of the International Council of Religious Education, which is the third council to participate in the work of the Committee on Town and Country.

Findings Consumed

• On the afternoon of November 16, 700 copies of the mimeographed reports of Commissions, for consideration of the Convocation, were quickly distributed. The stencils were all cut by William Clannin, of the headquarters staff of the Church of the Brethren.

Many Pamphlets Sold

• Pamphlet sales at only one of the three literature tables at the Convocation totalled over $180.00, made up mainly of small leaflets and pamphlets.

Next Convocation?

• The place and dates must be decided soon. Get invitations in promptly. TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will keep you informed.

Nutty Party

• Rev. Josef Barton of Bellville, Texas, a pastor of the Czech Brethren, provided a large bag of paper pecans for at least one nutty party. The janitor of the church has not been heard from.

Father and Son Attend

• Mr. Chris Rich, father of Mark Rich, attended the Elgin Convocation. Mr. Rich is a nurseryman at Hillsboro, Oregon.

Church Buildings

• An instructive illustrated lecture on church buildings was given before the Convocation by Dr. E. M. Conover, director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Church Architecture, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. With well-chosen slides, Dr. Conover presented practical information for the local church interested in either remodeling or new construction. Dr. Conover is glad to have inquiries by mail.

Improving Farm Tenure

• The Agricultural Experiment Station, Urbana, Illinois, publishes Bulletin No. 502 entitled *Improving Farm Tenure in the Midwest.* The material is all in terms of the North Central region. The bulletin presents a statement of probems and recommended policies.